

When Ronald Reagan took office in January 1981, the United States and NATO were losing the Cold War. The USSR had superiority in conventional weapons and manpower in Europe, and had embarked on a massive program to gain naval preeminence. But Reagan already had a plan to end the Cold War without armed conflict.

Reagan led a bipartisan Congress to restore American command of the seas by building the navy back to six hundred major ships and fifteen aircraft carriers. He adopted a bold new strategy to deploy the growing fleet to northern waters around the periphery of the Soviet Union and demonstrate that the NATO fleet could sink Soviet submarines, defeat Soviet bomber and missile forces, and strike aggressively deep into the Soviet homeland if the USSR attacked NATO in Central Europe. New technology in radars, sensors, and electronic warfare made ghosts of American submarines and surface fleets. The United States proved that it could effectively operate carriers and aircraft in the ice and storms of Arctic waters, which no other navy had attempted. The Soviets, suffocated by this naval strategy, were forced to bankrupt their economy trying to keep pace. Shortly thereafter the Berlin Wall fell, and the USSR disbanded.

John F. Lehman is an American investment banker and writer who served as Secretary of the Navy in the Ronald Reagan administration, where he promoted the creation of a 600-ship Navy. From 2003 to 2004 he was a member of the 9/11 Commission.

John McLain is an *AudioFile* Earphones Award-winning narrator who has recorded over 140 audiobook titles, from thrillers to nonfiction, westerns to mysteries, and more. John was nominated for an Audie Award in 2012 for his narration of *The Resurrection of Nat Turner, Part 1: The Witnesses* by Sharon Ewell Foster.

READ BY JOHN MCLAIN



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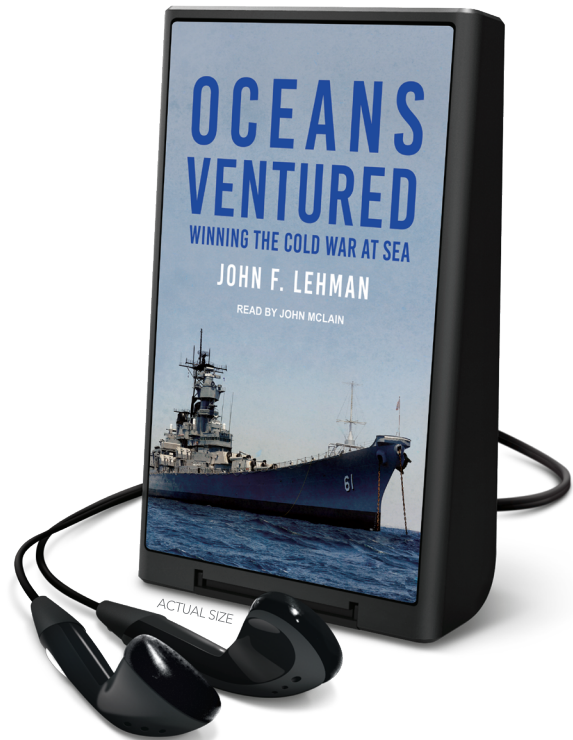
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